

## Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 ISLAMA 02326 091254Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----091256Z 085565 /43

P 091210Z MAR 77  
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 248

S E C R E T ISLAMABAD 2326

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PK, MNUC, PARM  
SUBJECT: NUCLEAR DISCUSSION WITH BHUTTO

REF: ISLAMABAD 2291

1. BHUTTO DID NOT GIVE ANYTHING AWAY IN HIS PRESS  
CONFERENCE REPLIES TO FOREIGN NEWSMEN'S QUESTIONS ABOUT  
NUCLEAR ISSUES. ALTHOUGH HIS REMARKS ABOUT DISCUSSING THE  
FRANCO-PAK AGREEMENT "THREADBARE" IN FORTHCOMING TALKS WITH  
THE USG CAN BE READ AS FORESHADOWING ANOTHER EFFORT TO  
SELL US ON THE FORMULA OF EXPANDED SAFEGUARDS, AT LEAST THE  
PM DID NOT USE THE OCCASION, AS HE HAS OTHERS, TO INSIST  
THAT THE AGREEMENT MUST BE IMPLEMENTED. THAT, AT LEAST,  
IS MILDLY ENCOURAGING.

2. AS HE HINTED IT WOULD BEFORE THE CAMPAIGN GOT UNDER  
WAY, BHUTTO'S BIG ELECTION VICTORY SHOULD ALLOW HIM GREATER  
ROOM FOR MANEUVER AS HE PREPARES FOR DISCUSSIONS WITH US.  
ALTHOUGH THE OPPOSITION HAS DENOUNCED THE VOTING AS FRAUDULENT,  
AND HAS ANNOUNCED ITS DECISION TO BOYCOTT TOMORROW'S PROVINCIAL  
ELECTIONS, WE SUSPECT THAT THE GENERAL VERDICT WILL BE THAT  
THE PM'S VICTORY, IF NOT ITS MAGNITUDE, WAS A GENUINE ONE.  
HE HAS IN ANY EVENT DEMONSTRATED THAT HE CONTINUES TO DOMINATE  
THE PAKISTAN POLITICAL SCENE, AND HE SHOULD HAVE LITTLE

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DIFFICULTY IN DEALING EFFECTIVELY WITH ANY NEAR-TERM  
CHALLENGE THE DISHEARTENED OPPOSITION SEEKS TO MOUNT AGAINST  
HIM IN THE STREETS OR ELSEWHERE. HIS POWER IN THE PPP ITSELF  
IS ALSO AS GREAT AS EVER: HE CAN RIGHTLY SAY TO HIS PARTYMEN  
THAT IT WAS HE WHO WAS THE ARCHITECT AND MANAGER OF THEIR  
INDIVIDUAL WINS, AND THAT THEY CONTINUE TO OWE THEIR POLITICAL  
STANDING TO HIM.

3. WE SHOULD IN ANY EVENT ACT IN OUR DISCUSSIONS WITH HIM AS IF HIS VICTORY WILL HAVE MADE IT EASIER FOR HIM TO MAKE CONCESSIONS. WE SHOULD RECOGNIZE HOWEVER THAT HE WILL STILL FACE SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PROBLEMS SHOULD HE AGREE TO POSTPONE THE REPROCESSING DEAL, AND THAT HE WILL REGARD HIMSELF AS THE BEST JUDGE OF THOSE PROBLEMS.

4. AS WE APPROACH OUR DISCUSSIONS, IT WILL BE IMPORTANT FOR US TO RECALL BHUTTO'S ORIGINAL MOTIVATION IN DECIDING TO GO FOR THE REPROCESSING PLANT. AS WE'VE POINTED OUT MANY TIMES BEFORE, THESE HAVE TO DO WITH PAKISTAN'S NATIONAL SECURITY AND THE RELATED ISSUE OF ITS NATIONAL PRESTIGE. OUR BEST, WE WOULD SAY OUR ONLY SERIOUS, CHANCE OF COMING OUT OF THESE NEGOTIATIONS SUCCESSFULLY AS IF WE CAN PERSUADE BHUTTO (A) THAT WE UNDERSTAND THE SECURITY CONCERNS THAT PAKISTAN FEELS; (B) THAT WE RECOGNIZE THAT IN THE WAKE OF THE INDIAN PNE THESE CONCERNS FOUND AN OUTLET IN THE SEARCH FOR A NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVES OPTION; AND (C) THAT OUR APPROACH TO THE REPROCESSING PLANT ISSUE IS GENUINELY INFLUENCED BY OUR APPRECIATION OF PAKISTAN'S DIFFICULT SECURITY SITUATION. IN DEALING WITH BHUTTO, IT IS ESSENTIAL THAT WE PROJECT AN UNDERSTANDING OF WHAT PAKISTAN'S SECURITY PROBLEMS AND CONCERNS ARE AND THAT IN THIS CONTEXT WE ARE WILLING TO TAKE CERTAIN STEPS ON OUR SIDE. OUR POSITION SHOULD BE THAT OF A WILLINGNESS TO DEAL WITH THESE CONCERNS RATHER THAN A PROCESS OF A MECHANICAL TRADE-OFF OR QUID PRO QUO.

5. THIS SAME CONCERNZAND UNDERSTANDING CAN BE FURTHER  
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UNDERScoreD BY OUR TAKING AS SYMPATHETIC A LINE AS POSSIBLE TOWARDS PAKISTANI INTEREST IN SECURITY GUARANTEES FOR NON-NUCLEAR STATES AND THE SOUTH ASIAN NUCLEAR WEAPONS FREE ZONE PROPOSAL.

6. BY THE SAME TOKEN, WE CONSIDER IT HIGHLY UNLIKELY THAT PROPOSALS WHICH IGNORE BHUTTO'S REAL MOTIVATION IN SEEKING THE REPROCESSING PLANT WILL HAVE ANY SERIOUS PROSPECT OF WINNING HIM OVER. WE HAVE IN MIND HERE PROPOSALS WHICH WOULD "TAKE BHUTTO AT HIS WORD," FOCUS EXCLUSIVELY ON HIS STATED REASONS FOR ACQUIRING THE FACILITY, AND OFFER ECONOMIC AND ENERGY PACKAGES. THESE WILL BE USEFUL IN ADDITION TO SECURITY INGREDIENTS, AND COULD BE PARTICULARLY HELPFUL AS SUPPLEMENTING ANY ANNOUNCED PACKAGE, E.G. US PARTICIPATION IN GUARANTEEING PAKISLEN A NUCLEAR FUEL SUPPLY

ARRANGED PRIMARILY BETWEEN PAKISTAN AND FRANCE AS PART OF A FORMULA WHICH INCLUDES THE INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF THE REPROCESSING FACILITY. BUT WE REMAIN CONVINCED THAT THEY

CANNOT ON THEIR OWN TURN THE TRICK.  
BYROADE

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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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